

Revelation 12 – The Woman and the Dragon

We are now introduced to a new prophecy dealing with God's Church in conflict with the powers of evil. This battle is seen throughout chapter 12 through 15, with chapter 16 through 19 dealing with the judgments of God upon those working against His Church. As we cover these chapters we will eventually see the final triumph of God's Church over these powers.

Revelation 12:1-2 “*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*”

By the language that is employed it is easily seen that a number of symbols are being used to describe what is taking place.

A great wonder - Greek *semeion* - “sign,” “mark,” “token,” “wonder.” The word is frequently translated “miracle” (Luke 23:8; John 4:54) where a miracle is described from the point of view of a sign of authority. In Revelation 12:1 *semeion* means a sign portending forthcoming events.

A woman - God's people, which is His Church, are likened unto a comely and delicate woman of virgin purity, or uncorrupted, in the Bible. (Jeremiah 6:2; Isaiah 51:16; 54:5-6; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-27, 31-32)

This woman, clothed with the heavenly bodies that God created to give light to the earth, (Genesis 1:14-17) (just as God said of His believers that they are the light of the world. Matthew 5:14) is in striking contrast to the woman of chapter 17, who is clothed and adorned with earthly things and has corrupted her purity in being a harlot.

There is no doubt that this woman is a representation of the True Church of God, for it is this woman that brings forth/gives birth to the man child, Jesus, and is persecuted after His ascension, verses 2, 4-6.

In the Old Testament we are introduced to 2 women, from whence these symbols are derived, the one representing Babylon, (Isaiah 47:1) and the other Jerusalem. (Jeremiah 6:2) Once again we see here in chapter 12 the bride of Christ in purity, spiritual Jerusalem, the Church of God, and in chapter 17 Satan's bride, spiritual Babylon earthly and sensual.

Therefore we can conclude that a pure woman is a pure Church and an impure woman is an impure Church. Here in chapter 12 is represented God's Church.

Clothed with the sun - The Church is symbolized as being clothed with the sun, or the glory of the Sun of Righteousness Jesus Christ. (Malachi 4:2) The sun is the source of light and is therefore the symbol of Christ “the Sun of righteousness, the Dayspring/Sunrising from on high,” and “*the light of the world*”, Malachi 4:2; Luke 1:78; John 8:12; 9:5. The church can only be the light of the world when it is

clothed with the righteousness of Christ. And this wedding garment/robe that the church/bride of Christ is wearing is His character or righteousness, Isaiah 52:1; 61:10; Revelation 19:7-8. It was Christ that was made “*sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*” 2 Corinthians 5:21. This righteousness is found in the Gospel. (Romans 1:16-17) Here we have the church clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

Moon under her feet - The moon is used for the platform/foundation for the Church. We see in Psalms 89:37, that the moon is a symbol of permanency, thus a permanent or sure foundation. The Church's foundation is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:10)

But as the moon is a reflector of the light of the Sun, that is the glory of the righteousness of Christ who is the embodiment of the Gospel, so too is the Old Testament a reflector of the Gospel of Christ and His righteousness through types and shadows. (John 5:39, 46-47; Luke 24:27, 44) All their hopes and longings were wrapped up in the Messiah to come as prefigured by the Sacrificial system and Old Testament scriptures.

Crown of twelve stars - Notice that the 12 stars constitute the crown. A crown denotes rulership and organization. With the Old Testament Church you had the 12 tribes of Israel, also the 12 Judges, the Old Testament priesthood consisted of 24 courses or 2x12. (1 Chronicles 24:1-18) The New Testament Church was led by the 12 Apostles and the final remnant Church, the Church that will be translated symbolized by the number 144,000 which is a multiple of 12.

In Rev 1 the seven stars are symbolic of the leaders of the Church.

Some have been so bold as to say that this woman represents the Virgin Mary. But this cannot be for after the birth of the child it was caught up to God's throne in heaven and the woman fled into the wilderness for 1260 days. But Joseph and Mary after the birth of Christ fled with him into Egypt, not the wilderness, then returned to Nazareth less than a year later. (Matthew 2:13-23) Also, using the day for a year rule that applies here, (see notes on Revelation 12:6, 14) this time period is not 1260 days but 1260 years. Mary did not spend 1260 years in the wilderness either.

This woman of chapter 12 represents the Church of God of all ages, in both the Old and New Testament.

2. With child - The church is presented at the time the Messiah is about to be born. Some see a reference to Isaiah 7:14. For the figure of a travailing woman see Isaiah 26:17; 66:7-8.

Travailing in birth, pained to be delivered - The sorrow and bitter anguish in the hour of trial. (Jeremiah 4:31; 6:22-24) But it also carries the idea of joy after the painful ordeal. (John 16:20-21)

Here we have a representation of God's people awaiting and longing the coming of the Messiah. This is seen in the instance with Simeon and Anna, of when Christ was brought to the temple to be dedicated. (Luke 2:25, 38)

Revelation 12:3-4 “*And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*”

Wonder - Greek *sēmeion*.

Great red dragon - Primarily we see that this beast is none other than Satan himself, verse 9. But we also see that this dragon tried to devour/destroy Christ at His birth. It was Satan working through Pagan Rome to destroy Christ. (Matthew 2:16) So we see that the dragon is not only Satan but whom he works through as well. The dragon is described as “red,” probably because of the fact that in all his connection with the church of God he has appeared in the role of persecutor and destroyer. It has been his studied purpose to destroy the children of the Most High.

Seven Heads - Notice that the crowns are upon the heads thus showing that the heads are ruling at this period of time. But Revelation 17:9-10 shows that these heads are consecutive, therefore we can see in chapter 12 that one of the heads is Pagan Rome.

Seven heads appear also on the beast John saw rising from the sea, (Revelation 13:1) as well as the scarlet-colored beast. (Revelation 17:3) The heads in Revelation 17:9-10 are identified as “seven mountains” and “seven kings.” It seems reasonable to conclude that the seven heads of the dragon represents political powers that have championed the cause of the dragon, and through which the dragon has exercised his persecuting power. Some hold that the number “seven” is here used as a round number denoting completeness, and that it is not necessary to find precisely seven nations through whom Satan has operated but when you Rev 17:9-11, you find that there are specific powers and not completeness.

Ten Horns - We will look at this more in chapter 13. The beast of chapter 13 and that of chapter 17 also had ten horns each. Some hold the ten horns of the dragon to be identical with those of these two beasts, and the latter to be identical with the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Others see in the ten horns of the dragon a more general designation for the minor political powers through which Satan has operated, in contrast with the seven heads, which may be regarded as representing the major political powers but clear and broader understanding we take a look at Zechariah 8:23, Gen 31:7, 41 where actually tens represents a complete confederacy.

Crowns - Greek *diademata*, singular *diadema*, literally, “something bound around,” from *diadeo*, “to bind around.” The word was used to describe the badge of kingship worn by Persian kings, a blue ribbon trimmed with white worn on the

turban. Hence the word came to be used as a badge of royalty. *Diademata* occurs only here and in Revelation 13:1 and Revelation 19:12. *Diadema* is contrasted with *stephanos*, also translated “crown” in the New Testament. (Matthew 27:29; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:8; etc.) *Stephanos* is a wreath often signifying the garland or chaplet given as a prize for victory.

Upon his heads - The fact that the heads are wearing badges of royalty may be taken as further evidence that they represent political kingdoms.

4. His tail drew - Literally, “his tail is drawing.” In prophetic vision John saw the action in progress. For more emphasis of what the tail represents we look at Isaiah 9:15.

Third part of the stars - We already know that the stars represent leaders. (Revelation 1:20, Daniel 12:3) Israel had a system of government of which there were three elements of power: the king, the Sanhedrin and the priesthood. Rome removed the kingly power or authority from Israel in 37 B.C.

Also we need to remember that this dragon is Satan and that there was war in heaven, verses 7-9, thus showing that the third of the stars/angels (the dragon and his angels, verse 7) of heaven fell to his deceptive power and were cast out with him. (Jude 1:6; 2 Peter 2:4)

To devour - This represents the efforts of Satan to destroy the infant Jesus. One needs only to recall the attitude of Herod as he listened to the message from the wise men.

Revelation 12:5 “And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

Man child - It is no doubt that this man child/seed of the woman is Christ. (Galatians 3:16) Here is the fulfillment of a 4000 year prophecy. (Genesis 3:15)

But we also see the ultimate destruction of His enemies at His second coming, as Christ is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. (Psalms 2:7-9; Revelation 19:15) It brings to mind the shepherd's rod which had a double function. The crook on one end served to help and guide the sheep, while the heavy ferrule on the other end, a metal cap or ring to strengthen the rod, made it also a weapon of assault. This was used for the protection of the flock, to repel and kill wild animals that would scatter and destroy it. So after Christ guiding His children on the earth marred with sin He will be their Sovereign King uninterrupted in the Kingdom of glory.

Caught up to God and His throne - Forty days after His resurrection Jesus was caught up to the Father and His throne. (Acts 1:9; John 16:10; 20:17; Revelation 3:21)

Revelation 12:6 “*And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*”

Wilderness - Greek *eremos*, “a forsaken, desert, empty place,” “an uninhabited place.” Here *eremos* doubtless represents a place of seclusion or obscurity, an area or condition in which the church would be in a place of obscurity, away from the public gaze.

A place - This place is referred to in verse 14 as “her place.” The idea is that the protection and sanctuary in obscurity here found by the woman were divinely appointed and prepared.

They - The subject is indefinite and doubtless refers to the various agencies God employed to preserve, strengthen, and build up the church during the time when she was severely persecuted.

Feed - Greek *trepho*, “to make to grow,” “to bring up,” “to rear,” “to nourish.” *Trepho* is rendered “nourished” in verse 14. God cares for His own. Even though the church is persecuted and driven into exile the Lord nourishes it.

1260 Days - This period of 1260 days is referred to seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation. It appears as 1260 days in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6, as 42 months in Revelation 11:2 and 13:5, and as 3 1/2 times in Daniel 7:25, 12:7 and Revelation 12:14. Most date this period from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. During this period God's hand was over the church preserving it from extinction.

Revelation 12:7-9 “*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*”

Michael - Also known as Michael the Archangel, simply meaning the chief of the angels who is like God. It is clear, as we harmonize scripture, that this is a reference to Christ.

The name Michael in Hebrew means “who is like God.” He is also referred to as the Archangel in Jude 1:9.” Michael is NOT a created angel but is the one in charge and the head of all the angels. It simply means, arch - chief of the angels - messenger, and Michael - who is like God.

In Jude 6 there is a dispute over the resurrection of Moses, for we know that Moses was resurrected as he was present at the mount of transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2-3) It is of interest to see that it is Michael the Archangel that is there contending for the body.

This teaching is often attributed to a specific Church but this teaching was known to exist a hundred years before this Church ever existed. Note the following Bible Commentary and the dates for this particular theologian.

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. Dr. John Gill (1690-1771)

Daniel 10:13 - *but, lo, Michael one of the chief Princes, came to help me; called in the New Testament an Archangel, the Prince of angels, the Head of all principality and power; and is no other than Christ the Son of God, an uncreated Angel; who is "one," or "the first of the chief Princes" (x), superior to angels, in nature, name, and office; he came to "help" Gabriel, not as a fellow creature, but as the Lord of hosts; not as a fellow soldier, but as General of the armies in heaven and earth, as superior to him in wisdom and strength; and he helped him by giving him fresh counsels, orders, and instructions, which he following succeeded:*

In 1 Thessalonians 4:16 the voice of the archangel is associated with the resurrection, but we find in (John 5:28-29) that it is the voice of Christ that brings about the resurrection. Jesus is also the express image of the Father's person, (Hebrews 1:3) thus showing that Christ, who is like God, is the chief of the heavenly host. Also, the Greek text does not specifically say "the voice of THE archangel" as found in the KJV Bible and can also translated as "the voice of AN archangel."

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *"For the Lord Himself [i.e., Jesus] will come down from heaven with a commanding shout [Note: This probably refers to Jesus' voice. See John 5:25, 28], [and] with the archangel's voice [i.e., Michael. See Jude 9] and with the sound of God's trumpet; [at this] the dead in [fellowship with] Christ will rise [from the dead] first."*

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *"Because the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a word of authority, with the voice of the chief angel, with the sound of a horn: and the dead in Christ will come to life first;"*

There are more texts to show comparisons, but we think it enough thus far to prove that Michael is none other than Christ.

Dragon - When Satan is represented as a dragon it represents him as a persecutor and destroyer as this symbol is used with this association.

8. Prevailed not - Inasmuch as the phrase "war in heaven" (verse 7) may have a dual application, describing both the original controversy in heaven between Lucifer and God and the controversy on earth between Satan and the incarnate Christ, the phrase "prevailed not" would appropriately apply to both stages of the conflict. In neither was Satan successful.

Their place - This phrase may be understood either as the place once possessed, or occupied, by them, or the place once assigned them. Lucifer was at one time the

covering cherub (see Ezekiel 28:14), and the angels who joined him in rebellion held various positions of responsibility. These, Lucifer and his angels lost when they were cast out of heaven.

Was cast out - Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven in ages past (2 Peter 2:4), prior to the creation of this world. Nevertheless, it seems that until the cross he had access to heavenly beings, and to a limited extent, possibly as “prince of this world” (John 12:31; Luke 4:6), but not as an inhabitant of heaven, to the precincts of heaven. However this may be, a decisive casting out occurred at the cross, as our Lord Himself declared. (John 12:31, 32) That John here (Revelation 12:9) refers also particularly to events connected with Christ's triumph on the cross is evident from the context. (verses 10-13) The following points may be noted:

1. The proclamation in verses 10-12 by a “loud voice ... in heaven” is more or less parenthetical, its purpose being to explain the significance of the casting down of Satan in verse 9, first with respect to the inhabitants of heaven and then to those of this earth. Following this explanatory parenthesis, verse 13 takes up the narrative of Satan's activities at the point where it was left in verse 9. Accordingly, verses 10-12 constitute primarily a statement concerning the status of the plan of salvation at the point of time when Satan was “cast out into the earth.”

2. The first declaration by the “loud voice” consists of a series of facts relative to Christ's triumph over Satan on the cross. In that the plan of “salvation” was made sure, “strength” was provided for resisting the wiles of Satan, Christ's “kingdom” was made sure, and His “power,” literally, “authority,” to be man's Saviour, high priest and king was confirmed. (Matthew 28:18)

3. The reason assigned in Revelation 12:10 for this fourfold achievement is specifically said to be that “the accuser of our brethren is cast down.” This clearly links these accomplishments with the casting down of verse 9.

4. At the time of the casting down of verses 9-10, 13 “the accuser of our brethren” had already been actively accusing “them before our God day and night.” Obviously, the fall here referred to came after a period during which Satan had been accusing “the brethren,” and it would therefore appear that this cannot be the original casting out of Satan prior to the creation of our earth.

5. Verse 11 specifically states that it was “the blood of the Lamb” as in the death of Christ upon the cross that had made victory over the “accuser of our brethren” possible.

Old - Greek *archaios*, “ancient,” “old,” from *archē*, “beginning.” Our English word “archaic” comes from *archaios*. Compare John 8:44.

Serpent - Brings our minds back to the garden of Eden dealing with the cunning and deception he used to gain Eve's submission. It represents his cunning and deception. (Genesis 3:1)

Devil - Greek *diabolos*, “a slanderer.” He is the father of lies (John 8:44) thus he is rightly called the devil, that is, a liar and slanderer. (see Matthew 4:1)

Satan - Greek *Satanas*, a transliteration of the Hebrew *śāṭan*, meaning “adversary.” (see Zechariah 3:1) He is the accuser of the brethren. Revelation 12:10.

Deceiveth - Greek *planaō*, “to cause to wander,” “to lead astray,” “to deceive.” (see Matthew 18:12)

World - Greek *oikoumenē*, literally, the “inhabited [world],” from *oikeō*, “to dwell.” (see Matthew 4:8)

Into the earth - The controversy in heaven began over plans for the creation of man. When the earth was created and Adam was appointed its vicegerent, Satan directed his efforts at overthrowing the newly created man. When he succeeded in bringing about the downfall of Adam and Eve he claimed the earth as his domain: see Matthew 4:8-9). However, he did not confine his efforts to this earth but tempted also the inhabitants of other. Not until the second coming of Christ will Satan be completely confined to this earth Revelation 20:3)

Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven, but what was the war all about?

The War

In Ezekiel 28:12-15, 17 the king of Tyre is used as a symbol of Satan, who was the real ruler for he had control over the monarch. It is seen that he was created with many attributes; full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, created with musical abilities already built in, he stood by the throne of God as the most exalted angel. All was fine until iniquity was found in him.

His heart was lifted up because of his beauty, that is, he became very proud/haughty which means he had a high opinion of himself because of his outward attributes. Isaiah reveals to us his aspirations.

Isaiah 14:4, 12-14. The real ruler of Babylon was Satan as he had control over the king, so we find that the king of Babylon is used as a symbol of Satan. Lucifer, who became Satan, desired in his heart to be like the most high, to sit upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.

The “king of Babylon” was a heathen, and in heathen mythology the gods held their council meetings on a high mountain, where they determined the affairs of earth. The literal “king of Babylon” would thus presume to usurp the control of the gods, that is, supreme authority over the affairs of earth. As king of mystical Babylon Satan would similarly aspire to control the councils of heaven, that is, to rule the universe of God.

This is reflected more clearly in the understanding of the phrase “*sides of the north*” in (Psalms 48:1-2) Originally Mt. Zion referred only to the section of the city

captured from the Jebusites. (2 Chronicles 5:2; 2 Samuel 5:7) Mt. Moriah lay to the north of Zion hill, and it was on this northern hill that the Temple and the palace of Solomon were later erected. (2 Chronicles 3:1; 1 Kings 8:1) Geographically the two eminences of Zion and Moriah form a single ridge. After the building of the Temple the entire ridge became known as Zion. See Isaiah 8:18 and Joel 3:17. Because of the presence of the sanctuary and of the palace on the northern part of the ridge from the time of Solomon, the northern section became the most important district of the city. Hence by the expression “*sides of the north*” the psalmist may have figuratively attempted to represent the seat of civil and religious government and specifically the dwelling place of God, as the context of the psalm indicates. In Isaiah Lucifer is represented as aspiring to sit “*in the sides of the north.*” To sit in such a position meant to share in God's counsels and to enter into the divine purposes. This was precisely Lucifer's ambition.

This clearly indicates that prior to this time Lucifer was not allowed to sit in the divine counsels, but because of the high opinion of himself through the glorious outward adorning and wisdom he had, he thought it was his right to be a part of such a thing. Thus is seen that he wished to overthrow the government of God and replace it with his own. The foundation of God's throne/government is His law. (Psalms 97:2; margin, 119:172) So he also had a problem with the law, which is reflected in the end of chapter 12 and through chapter 13 of Revelation where we have those that keep the Commandments of God. The war was a struggle for supremacy.

When was Satan cast out? In verses 7-12 we see that there are expulsions of Satan. Firstly he was cast out of heaven, but one must ask to where was he cast? 2 Peter 2:4 reveals that when they were cast out of their first abode they were cast into hell, or “Tartarus” in the Greek. This is the only place in the Bible that this word is used, but it is obvious that it is not a reference to this earth for we see in the following verses of chapter 12 that he is, at another time, cast to this earth.

It is a place of chains of darkness. Darkness is the opposite of light and thus it is a place outside the presence of God, who is light. Therefore it cannot be Eden nor the other worlds as they are realms of light, wherein is God's presence. All that is left for him and his angels then, is to wander through space with no place of abode.

But Satan gained access to this earth by the overthrowing of the inhabitants, gaining their allegiance through their disobedience to the express command of God. He thus claimed this world as his own (Matthew 4:8-9) and is known as the god of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Job 1:6-7; 2:1-2, shows clearly that Satan had a certain amount of access to heaven as a representative of the earth. But he went as an accuser of the brethren. It was from this position, a representative of the earth, in gaining access to heaven that he was cast out. This is in the context of “now is salvation come.” When Christ died upon the cross salvation was sealed or forever made sure, the victory had been won. It sealed the doom of Satan for through death Christ would destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Hebrews 2:14) Jesus himself said, “*Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* 32.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33. This he said, signifying what death he should die.” John 12:31-33. The casting out was spoken by Jesus in the context of the cross.

So the heavens could truly rejoice as the devil no longer had access to it as the accuser of the brethren. But woe unto us that live upon the earth for this is the only place of abode for him and his angels.

Satan will also be cast into the bottomless pit of chapter 20 and then into the lake of fire where he will be totally destroyed. We then see that there are 4 casting outs of Satan.

Revelation 12:10 *“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”*

A loud voice - There is great rejoicing in the courts of heaven over the casting down of Satan and his host.

Now is come - The true character of Satan was shown at the cross. He was shown to be a liar and murderer where the opposite was revealed about Christ. Deliverance and victory come through the cross.

Salvation - Greek *sōtēria*, “deliverance,” “preservation,” “salvation,” here, perhaps, “victory.” The Greek has the article, hence we should read “the victory.”

And strength - Greek *dunamis*, “power,” “might,” “strength.” The reference here is doubtless to the display of power in the overthrow of the dragon. But also in the light of the cross we find that there is power in the cross of Christ to bring salvation to the believer. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

The kingdom of our God - Satan had contended that he was the rightful ruler of this world, Matthew 4:8-9; Job 1:6-7, seeing Adam and Eve bowed to his sophistry thus giving him their allegiance. (as we have already mentioned above) But Satan's failure to bring Christ under his control, through getting Jesus to sin, assured the kingdom for Christ.

Power of his Christ - Greek *exousia*, “authority.” Matthew 28:18, Christ has all authority and the cross established it. Satan had questioned the authority/supremacy of Christ, but the cross has put away any questioning. Christ means “anointed.” (see Matthew 1:1)

The accuser - Satan was the accuser of the brethren in Old Testament days. (see Job 1:8-12; Zechariah 3:1) This role he has continued since the cross but in a restricted sense.

Day and night - That is, whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Revelation 12:11 “*And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.*”

They overcame - The mind of the prophet is absorbed in contemplation of those who have been accused by the instigator of evil. He thinks of how they have suffered, and the indignities to which they have been exposed. He remembers how amid hardships they overcame, not in their own strength, but “by the blood of the Lamb.”

By the blood - Literally, “because of the blood,” or “on the basis of the blood.” The saints overcame because of the victory of Calvary. For the significance of the “blood” see notes on Revelation 1:5; cf. Romans 5:9.

We can overcome Satan through the blood of Christ, because of His shed blood on Calvary.

It washes/cleanses us from sin. (Revelation 1:5; 1 John 1:7)

It justifies the believer and makes our spiritual garments white. (Romans 3:25; Revelation 7:14)

It makes us nigh unto God, buys/redeems us back from sin. (Ephesians 2:13; 1:7; Colossians 1:14)

It makes us perfect to do His will. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

And by our own personal witness for Christ and the gospel we can overcome him. (Romans 10:9-10)

By the word - Literally, “on account of the word,” or “on the basis of the word.”

Their testimony - That is, their personal witness concerning Jesus and the gospel.

Loved not their lives - What fidelity! Men would die rather than disobey God.

Revelation 12:12 “*Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.*”

Rejoice ye heavens - As we have already discussed, because of the casting out of Satan from the rest of the universe from the time of the cross, the heavens and those that dwell in them can rejoice for they do not have to put up with the accuser of the brethren any longer.

Woe - The woe is to the inhabitants of the earth for the devil is bound to this place. For the church there was further persecution, hence its members could not yet rejoice. Also his wrath has increased for he knows that there isn't much time left

for him. His objective is to destroy as many as possible, for he walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

Great wrath - He is angry because of his defeat. Rather than experience remorse and sorrow for evil, he plunges more and more deeply into iniquity. He goes forward with intensified and renewed malignity in his efforts to persecute the church of the living God. Compare 1 Peter 5:8.

Short - Greek *oligos*, “few,” “small,” “little,” when used of number, quantity, or size; “short,” when used of time. *Oligos* is a relative term and describes that with which it is associated in terms of the context. Thus *oligos* describes the “few little fishes” in the narrative of the feeding of the 4,000 in comparison with the number that would be required to feed that multitude. (Matthew 15:34) The number that find the way of life are “few” (*oligos*) compared with the number that choose the way of destruction. (Matthew 7:14) Jesus laid His hands on a “few” (*oligos*) sick folks compared with the number who might have been healed had there not been such unbelief. (Mark 6:5)

Oligos is used with reference to time in eight instances in the New Testament. In five of these instances the time element is implied in the word itself (Mark 6:31; James 4:14; 1 Peter 1:6; 5:10; Revelation 17:10) and the word is translated respectively “a while,” “little time,” “season,” “a while,” “short space.” In three instances the time element is expressed by a word modified by *oligos*. (Acts 14:28, which reads literally, “not a little time”; Hebrews 12:10; Revelation 12:12) The length of time expressed by *oligos* is dependent upon that with which it is compared. For example, the rest described in Mark 6:31 as lasting *oligos* probably continued only a few days, or at the most a few weeks. On the other hand, in James 4:14 *oligos* describes the life span of a man. In Revelation 12:12 *oligos* defines the period of time from the casting out of Satan at the time of the crucifixion of Christ to the end of Satan's tyranny over the inhabitants of earth. This period of time is described as *oligos* in comparison with the more than 4,000 years preceding the crucifixion.

It may appear that the 2,000 years since the crucifixion, during which Satan has been actively at work against the church, is hardly a “short time” either absolutely or when compared with all the time from Adam to the cross. However, this expression should be understood against the background of the whole tenor of the book of Revelation, which presents the second coming of Christ as near. If Jesus is coming “quickly,” then the time for Satan to work is “short.”

Revelation 12:13 “*And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*”

Persecuted the woman - Unable any more to directly attack Christ, Satan, as the dragon attempts to hurt the Son through the mother by persecuting the mother of the man-child, this being primarily the Christian Church.

In various ways persecution came. The early Christians were warned of this very fact (John 16:2) and the first persecution came from within, the Jews themselves.

(Acts 4:3, 18; 5:17-18, 27-28, 40; 7:54-8:3; 9:1-2) Then we have the persecution from Pagan Rome as seen under the Church of Smyrna. From here followed the great persecution of the Dark Ages under the hand of the Papal Church, corresponding to the Church of Thyatira, which is brought to view in verse 6 and the following verses.

Revelation 12:14 *“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”*

Two wings - These wings are used for fleeing into the wilderness from the wrath of the dragon. This figure is also used for the deliverance of the children of Israel from Pharaoh, how God lead them and carried them. (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11) Here we have depicted God caring for His Church.

The wilderness - A desert, solitary place, waste. Thus a place of seclusion or obscurity was where the Church fled, away from civilization and the public gaze. There were a number of places but the most famous is that of the Waldensian valleys amid the Cottian Alps, 30 miles west of Turin in northern Italy.

This was to be for 1260 prophetic days and thus 1260 years, as verse 14 is parallel to verse 6. This period is mentioned 7 times in scripture, twice in chapter 12, once in chapter 13 where it is known as 42 months, twice in chapter 11, once each in Daniel 7:25; 12:7, with each instance referring to the same period. This is a reference to the Papal supremacy of 538-1798 A.D. Notice the following;

‘In the year 532, Justinian issued an edict declaring his intention “to unite all men in one faith.” Whether they were Jews, Gentiles, or Christians, all who did not within three months profess and embrace the Catholic faith, were by the edict “declared infamous, and as such excluded from all employments both civil and military; rendered incapable of leaving anything by will; and all their estates confiscated, whether real or personal.” As a result of this cruel edict, “great numbers were driven from their habitations with their wives and children, stripped and naked. Others betook themselves to flight, carrying with them what they could conceal, for their support and maintenance; but they were plundered of what little they had, and many of them inhumanly massacred.” Quotes from History of the Popes, John II, par.2. by Bower. As found in Ecclesiastical Empire, chap. XII, par. 41. by Alonzo T. Jones.

In 533 A.D. Emperor Justinian, who ruled from Constantinople in the east, decreed that the Bishop of Rome was the Universal Bishop over the entire Church. (Today the Pope remains the universal bishop over the Roman Catholic Church by reason of this decree) But the Catholics were suffering a violent persecution from the Arian Vandals of northern Africa. They were intolerant of the Catholics and termed them heretics. Thus unless they could be removed the Papacy could not rise to the power of Justinian's decree. Justinian sent his ablest General Belisarius to North Africa and totally wiped the Vandals from the face of the earth in the year 534 A.D.

This only left the Arian tribe of the Ostrogoths, who had the throne of Italy and were restraining the power of the Papacy. They too were defeated by Belisarius in the year 538 A.D., leaving not enough of them to have their heritage remain. Justinian's decree could take effect now as the opposition had been removed.

By 538 A.D. the Church of Rome had full supremacy. The longer time went on the less safe it was to live or mingle in populated areas where one could easily be recognized as or found out to be a so called heretic. To teach contrary to or stand up against the Papal Power could very easily and most likely result in the death of the so called offender. The only safety was in the mountainous regions and places of obscurity to where God's Church fled.

Nourished and feed - The Waldenses were fed and nourished on the truths of God's Word, spiritual milk, spiritual meat and spiritual bread. (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-13, John 6:51-52, 63) They had the Bible in their own tongue translated from the uncorrupted manuscripts of Lucian, the famous scholar of Syria in post-apostolic times.

Revelation 12:15 “*And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*”

Serpent cast out - Notice that here it is said that the flood came out of the mouth of the serpent but in verse 16 it is out of the dragon. Remember that when serpent is used it is a reference to cunning, deception and lies. It was through lies and deceit that the campaigns/crusades were waged against God's people in the wilderness regions, the false promises of pardon and paradise all of which were coming from the Papal Church's mouth. Satan sought to destroy the Christian church by the inundation of false doctrines as well as by persecution.

Water as a flood - This is derived from the Old Testament where the River Euphrates is described as a flood. (Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15) The same is found in Jeremiah 46:2-3. In Psalms 74:13 and Ezekiel 29:3 a dragon is identified as a water animal so this could possibly symbolize water as a symbol of destruction also. According to Genesis 15:8 the Euphrates was the appointed boundary ancient Israel and Babylon. When the snows of Mt. Ararat melted, the Euphrates often overflowed into the appointed territory of Israel. Thus the prophets used this to illustrate the invasion of Israel by her enemies from the north.

Here we can say that it is used to show the rising up or overflowing of the Church's enemies with the intent to destroy her. Some crusades are as follows;

- Against the Celtic Christians in Britain.
- Against the non-Catholic Christians of Thrace in 538 A.D.
- Against the Ostrogoths in Italy in 538 A.D.
- Against the Waldenses in Northern Italy on many occasion.
- Against the Albigenses in south and western France.
- In Ireland by Henry II of England with the support of the Papacy.
- Against the Lollards in England, the followers of John Wycliff.
- Against Spanish Protestants at the time of the Spanish Inquisition.

- Against the Hussites, the followers of John Huss in Bohemia.
- Against German Protestants at the time of the reformation.
- Against Swiss Protestants by Catholic Authorities.
- Against Dutch Protestants by Phillip II of Spain.
- Against English Protestants by the Spanish Armada.
- Against French Protestants called Huguenots in the St. Bartholemew massacre.
- Etc., all of which the Church of Rome had their hand in.

Revelation 12:16 “*And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.*”

Earth helped the woman - How did the earth open up her mouth to swallow up the flood of persecution? God did employ the natural elements of the earth to help the fleeing saints, mountainous places, isolated valleys, secret caves, cloud and mist, wind and tempest etc.

Finally, the earth is the opposite of waters and thus a sparsely populated area: (see Revelation 17:15) We also have the regions of Europe referred to as the sea as we look at prophecy, thus the earth can not refer to any place in densely populated Europe. In the 17th and 18th centuries America came into being, the land of freedom. Because of religious intolerance by Church and king the Pilgrim Fathers left England bound for America where the Papal tentacles had no dominance.

Swallowed up - That is, made ineffectual the devices of destruction.

Revelation 12:17 “*And the dragon was wrath with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*”

Dragon was wrath - Or “was enraged.” He was not successful in his attempt to carry the woman away in the flood of persecution. Thus he turns his special attention against the remnant of the woman's seed.

To make war - In an endeavor to destroy the Christian church. His supreme effort in this direction is still in the future.

Remnant - Greek *loipoi*, “remaining ones,” from *leipo*, “to leave,” “to leave behind.” That which remains or residue and therefore it is the last of her offspring but small or in a minority. In saying this it must be identical to the first or original Church.

Let us look at some identifying marks;

1. It will be a minority, remnant.
 2. We also see that it arises after the 1260 years of Papal supremacy thus after 1798.
 3. First arises in America, the earth that helped the woman.
 4. Apostolic in nature, similar teaching and belief of the apostles.
 5. It incurs the wrath of the dragon, unpopular.
 6. Keeps the Commandments of God including the fourth.
 7. Has the testimony of Jesus Christ which is the Spirit of Prophecy or the Gift of Prophecy manifest through a prophet or prophets. (Revelation 19:10; 22:9)
 8. Being the last it must be expecting the [Second Coming of Christ](#).
 9. The Gospel is to be preached in all the world, (Matthew 24:14, Revelation 14:6) thus it must be a world wide movement.
 10. This Gospel is outlined in Revelation 14:6-12.
- Everlasting Gospel - Jesus Christ and Him crucified (High priestly ministry in heavenly sanctuary)
 - Fear God - Victory over sin, righteousness by faith. (Job 1:1; Proverbs 8:13; 16:6)
 - Give glory to Him - Health and temperance, Christian standards. (1 Corinthians 10:31)
 - Judgment has come and is in progress.
 - Worship Him - Christ the creator and Sabbath.
 - Expose who and what is Babylon and her teachings.
 - Identify who the beast and his image are.
 - Expose the mark and worship of the beast.

It is interesting that after we completed the above, we could find only one group that fits all of these identifying marks and that was the Seventh-day Adventist movement, which is a Church that seems to have a lot of unjustified prejudice coming against it and so this requires close scrutiny as it is clear that Satan would attack such a movement with the importance of the message to be given. While it is a minority group, yet it is the most widespread Protestant movement in the world today.

Seventh-day Adventists claim that they are the bearers of God's last message to the world, the message that prepares God's people world wide, for the second coming of Christ. Does this mean that Seventh-day Adventists believe that they alone, are the people of God? It is interesting that they say no to this question. They believe that they have God's final message for the world. They believe that there are other remnants of God's people in the Churches of Christendom. There are other remnants of God's people, born again believers, who are living according to the light they have. However these remnants do not fulfil the identifying marks of the true remnant. What then will be the lot of the remnants that are scattered throughout the various Churches of Babylon? Scripture reveals that God has set a special standard, in order to fit the saints for translation. This standard is revealed in the character of the 144,000, the number that represents or symbolizes the final remnant of God's people. Those who fail to permit God to produce within them the

character essential for translation will be shaken out of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Only those who are classed by God as over comers will comprise the final remnant and so would involve only a minute amount of Seventh-day Adventists. The majority of the final remnant will comprise the remnants who are now in Babylon but who ultimately will come out of Babylon. In the final call of God to His people, in Revelation 18:1-4, He calls out of Babylon, all those who still belong to Christ.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that there will be large numbers who will come out of the various religious bodies and join with them in the keeping of all the Commandments of God and be ready for the coming of Christ. They believe that the majority of God's people are in the Churches of Babylon. There are godly remnants within those Churches, which finally will come out and unite with those Seventh-day Adventists who are true to Christ, which would mean that finally, *“there will be one fold and one shepherd.”* John 10:16.

Keep the commandments - That the remnant is thus identified indicates that the commandments of God will be especially controverted in this struggle between the dragon and church.

Testimony of Jesus Christ - Or “witness of Jesus Christ.” In the Greek this phrase may be understood either as the “testimony” (or “witness”) Christians bear concerning Jesus or as the “testimony” (or “witness”) that originates with Jesus and is revealed to His church through the prophets. A comparison with Revelation 19:10 clearly favors the latter interpretation. There the “testimony of Jesus” is defined as the “spirit of prophecy,” meaning that Jesus is witnessing to the church through the medium of prophecy.

The close relationship between the “testimony of Jesus” and prophecy is further demonstrated by a comparison between Revelation 19:10 and Revelation 22:9. In Revelation 19:10 the angel identifies himself as “thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus,” and in Revelation 22:9 as “thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets.” Thus on the reasonable conclusion that these two expressions of the angel are parallel, those who have the testimony of Jesus are identified with the prophets. Since it is the distinctive work of the prophets to bear messages from Jesus to the people, the interpretation that the testimony of Jesus refers to the “testimony,” or “witness,” that Jesus bears to the church is strongly supported. Seventh-day Adventists thus interpret the passage and believe that the “remnant” will be distinguished by the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in their midst. The “testimony of Jesus Christ,” they believe, is the witness of Jesus in their midst through the medium of the prophetic gift.